

Message Text

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70

ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

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P 040917Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7291

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8077

CINCPAC FOR AMBASSADOR SNEIDER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN

SUBJECT: SOUTH-NORTH COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC)

REF: (A) SEOUL 8024; (B) SEOUL 8040

SUMMARY: SOUTH AND NORTH HAVE AGREED ON SNCC MEETING POSTPONEMENT WHILE LEAVING STAGE SET FOR FURTHER CONTROVERSY OVER CONTINUING CONTACTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ROK WHILE EXPRESSING "PROFOUND REGRET" AT PYONGYANGS "ONE-SIDED" DEALY HAS ACCEPTED NORTH KOREAN PROPOSAL TO HOLD NINTH SNCC DEPUTY CO-CHAIRMAN'S MEETING ON JANUARY 8 INSTEAD OF DECEMBER 4 (REF B). IN STATEMENT RELEASED MORNING OF DEC 4, SOUTH SNCC SPOKESMAN LEE TONG BOK ANNOUNCED THAT, AFTER SEVERAL HOT LINE EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, SOUTH "HAD TO ACCEPT THE POSTPONEMENT" BECAUSE IT APPEARED PYONGYANG WOULD BOYCOTT THE MEETING ANYWAY.

2. HOT LINE MESSAGE FROM SOUTH DEPUTY CO-CHAIRMAN CHANG KI-YONG ACCEPTING JAN 8 DATE ALSO INCLUDED PROPOSALS TO HOLD SNCC
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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SESSION ON DEC 18, IN LIEU OF DEC 4 SPOKESMEN'S

MEETING PROPOSED BY NORTH, AND TO FORM A FACT-FINDING TEAM TO UNDERTAKE JOINT ON-THE-SPOT INVESTIGATION OF DMZ TUNNEL AND TO ASSURE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE TUNNEL. (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, CONSISTING OF THREE MEMBERS FROM EACH SIDE, WAS CREATED PURSUANT TO AGREED MINUTE OF NOV 4, 1972 (PARA 3B) AND HELD THREE MEETINGS IN SPRING OF 1973 BEFORE DIALOGUE WAS SUSPENDED.)

3. SPOKESMAN LEE TOLD EMBOFF THAT SOUTH'S CALL FOR JOINT INVESTIGATIVE TEAM, WHICH HE READILY ACKNOWLEDGED WOULD BE REJECTED BY NORTH, WAS TO HAVE BEEN MADE IN DEC 4 MEETING AND WAS INSTEAD MADE PUBLICLY ALONG WITH LENGTHY DENUNCIATION OF TUNNEL IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS NORTH IN UN. HE SAID EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING WAS PROPOSED IN ORDER TO PUT SOUTH ON RECORD AS TRYING TO REVIVE AN IMPORTNAT SNCC ORGAN AT TIME WHEN NORTH IS TRYING TO DOWNGRADE DIALOGUE. HE EXPECTS THAT NORTH WILL LET DECEMBER 18 PASS WITHOUT REPLYING TO THIS PROPOSAL. LEE SAID ROK WOULD ISSUE NO FURTHER STATEMENTS AT THIS TIME.

4. ROK PRESS CONTINUES TO CRITICIZE NORTH'S PROPOSAL FOR "INDEFINITE" POSTPONEMENT AS EXAMPLE OF PYONGYANG'S "TOTAL LACK OF SINCERITY." IN DEC 4 EDITORIAL ENTITLED "PYONGYANG'S REBUFF OF DIALOGUE," GOVERNMENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE KOREA HERALD RECALLS DRAMATICALLY HOW SOUTH "PLEADED WITH THE NORTH" IN FALL OF 1973 TO KEEP DIALOGUE OPEN AND HOW "PYONGYANG RELUCTANTLY AGREED." CLAIMING THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR NORTH KOREANS TO "SIDESTEP OUR PROTEST" OVER DMZ TUNNEL AT SNCC MEETING, PRESS CONCLUDES THAT NORTH HAS CHOSEN NOW TO POSTPONE THE DIALOGUE INDEFINITELY, THUS DEMONSTRATING TO THE WORLD THAT IT HAS NO INTEREST IN PROMOTING PEACE AND STABILITY ON KOREAN PENINSULA.

5. NORTH KOREAN RADIO, ON OTHER HAND, HAS EXPRESSED SUBSTANTIAL INDIGNATION OVER ROK CHARGE THAT PYONGYANG WISHED TO POSTPONE THE SNCC MEETINGS INDEFINITELY, DENYING THE CHARGE AND ACCUSING THE SOUTH OF TWISTING THE NORTH'S WORDS. ON QUESTION OF WHETHER NORTH HAD IN FACT CALLED FOR INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT (REF A), LEE WAS EMPHATIC. HE TOLD EMBOFF THAT NORTH'S INITIAL POSITION HAD BEEN THAT MEETING WOULD BE RESUMED ONLY WHEN AND IF SPOKESMEN'S MEETINGS RESOLVED "CERTAIN

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MATTERS" PERTAINING TO THE MEETINGS. SOUTH READ THIS AS MEANING THAT NORTH PLANNED TO INTRODUCE IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR RESUMING CONTACTS BETWEEN THE DUPUTY CO-CHAIRMAN. LEE SAID PROMPT AND FIRM REACTION BOTH VIA HOT LINE AND IN ROK PRESS MADE NORTH KOREANS CAUTIOUS, AND THEY QUICKLY REVISED THEIR OWN ACCOUNTS OF THEIR PROPOSAL TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THEY INTENDED TO RESUME THE MEETINGS IN JANUARY. HOWEVER,

LEE IS SKEPTICAL THAT NORTH WILL ACTUALLY PERMIT
JAN 8 MEETING TO BE HELD.

6. COMMENT: MOST HEATED CONTROVERSY IN RECENT MONTHS
OVER CONTINUATION OF THE SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE SEEMS TO
HAVE BEEN RESOLVED FOR MOMENT. NORTH HAS ACHIEVED
PROBABLY OBJECTIVE OF MOVING MEETING AWAY FROM UNGA
DEBATE BUT HAS EVIDENTLY FELT OBLIGED TO ACT
IN CONCILIATORY FASHION TO PREEMPT SOUTH'S CHARGE
OF "INDEFINITELY" POSTPONING IT.
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